

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and reconsideration of the application identified in caption, as amended, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.111 and in light of the remarks which follow, are respectfully requested.

By the above amendment, claim 9 has been amended for readability purposes by replacing the word "aluminium" with "aluminum".

In the Official Action, claim 9 stands objected to for reciting the word "aluminium". This objection has been obviated by the above amendment of claim 9, and as such, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for the reasons set forth at pages 2 and 3 of the Official Action. Contrary to the Patent Office's assertion, claim 6 does not currently recite the term "Polybrene". Such term was deleted from claim 6 in the Amendment filed on July 16, 2001. Accordingly, withdrawal of the §112 rejection is now in order.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-12, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,550,189 (*Qin et al*). Claims 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by *Qin et al*. Withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

According to one aspect of the present invention as defined by claim 1, a method of producing polysaccharide fibers is provided. The method comprises the steps of dissolving a polysaccharide in a solvent to form a solution, and spraying the solution into a bath which contains a water-miscible organic solvent and a cross-linker, wherein the solvent dissolving the polysaccharide is water, and wherein the cross-linker ionically cross-links the polysaccharide.

Qin et al relates to methods for producing a water-swellable, water-insoluble carboxyalkyl polysaccharide (col. 3, lines 10-12). *Qin et al* discloses a method comprising forming a mixture comprising a water-soluble carboxyalkyl polysaccharide, water and a crosslinking agent; recovering the carboxyalkyl polysaccharide from the mixture; and heat-treating the recovered carboxyalkyl polysaccharide at a temperature above about 50°C (col. 3, lines 23-28).

It is well established that in order to anticipate a claim, each and every element as set forth in such claim must be found, either explicitly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. See M.P.E.P. §2131. In the present case, *Qin et al* fails to disclose each feature of an aspect of the present invention defined by claim 1, and as such, does not constitute an anticipation of such claim.

For example, *Qin et al* does not disclose spraying a solution into a bath which contains a water-miscible organic solvent and a cross-linker, wherein the solution is formed by dissolving a polysaccharide in water, as recited in claim 1.

In this regard, *Qin et al* does disclose forming a mixture comprising, *inter alia*, a water-soluble carboxyalkyl polysaccharide and water. However, *Qin et al* has no disclosure or recognition of spraying this mixture, let alone into a bath which contains a water-miscible organic solvent and a cross-linker. Moreover, in stark contrast with the claimed step of spraying the dissolved polysaccharide solution into a bath containing a cross-linker, *Qin et al* discloses that the polysaccharide mixture itself contains a crosslinking agent.

For at least the above reasons, it is apparent that *Qin et al* does not constitute an anticipation of claim 1.

According to another aspect of the present invention as defined by claim 13, a polysaccharide fiber is provided comprising a polysaccharide fiber having been produced according to the method of claim 1. According to a further aspect of the present invention as defined by claim 15, an absorbent structure in an absorbent article is provided, wherein the absorbent structure includes polysaccharide fibers having been produced according to claim 1.

Qin et al fails to disclose a polysaccharide fiber having been produced according to the method of claim 1, as recited in claims 13 and 15. As discussed above, whereas claim 1 recites spraying a dissolved polysaccharide solution into a bath which contains a water-miscible organic solvent and a cross-linker, *Qin et al* discloses that the polysaccharide mixture itself contains a crosslinking agent. *Qin et al* has no mention of spraying the polysaccharide mixture thereof into a bath containing a water-miscible organic solvent and a cross-linker.

By spraying the dissolved polysaccharide solution into a bath containing a water-miscible organic solvent and a cross-linker in accordance with one aspect of the present invention, certain advantageous structural properties can be obtained, for example, the cross-linking of the surface of the formed polysaccharide fibers. *Qin et al*, on the other hand, has no disclosure or recognition of spraying the polysaccharide mixture thereof into a bath containing a water-miscible organic solvent and a cross-linker. Therefore, it is clear that the polysaccharide fiber produced according to the method of claim 1, is different from the polysaccharide material formed by the method disclosed by *Qin et al*.

For at least the above reasons, it is apparent that claims 13 and 15 are not anticipated by *Qin et al*. Accordingly, withdrawal of the above §102(e) rejections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-12 and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over *Qin et al* in view of an abstract of European Patent Document No. 410,323 (*Coull et al*). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

The deficiencies of *Qin et al* are discussed above in the §102(e) rejection based thereon. Specifically, *Qin et al* does not disclose spraying a solution into a bath which contains a water-miscible organic solvent and a cross-linker, wherein the solution is formed by dissolving a polysaccharide in water, as recited in claim 1. Furthermore, absent an improper resort to Applicants' own disclosure, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to modify *Qin et al* to spray a dissolved polysaccharide solution into a bath which contains a water-miscible organic solvent and a cross-linker.

Coull et al relates to a method for immobilizing a peptide or protein onto a flat, microporous membrane.

Coull et al fails to cure the above-described deficiency of *Qin et al*. In this regard, *Coull et al* has been relied upon for disclosing the use of polyvinylamine with a cellulose product (Official Action at page 8). Without addressing the propriety of the combination of *Qin et al* with *Coull et al*, it is noted that like *Qin et al*, *Coull et al* does not disclose or suggest spraying a solution into a bath which contains a water-miscible organic solvent and a cross-linker, wherein the solution is formed by dissolving a polysaccharide in water, as recited in claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established. Accordingly, withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection based on *Qin et al* and *Coull et al* is respectfully requested.

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order, and such action is earnestly solicited.

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If the Examiner has any questions relating to this paper, or the application in general, he is invited to telephone the undersigned at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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